



Board of Appeals presentation
December 7th, 2022

Presentation:

- The process for obtaining tree removal permits
- Relevant Code provisions
- The hearing process at Public Works

Why remove a tree?

Tree removal by Public Works (or contractor)

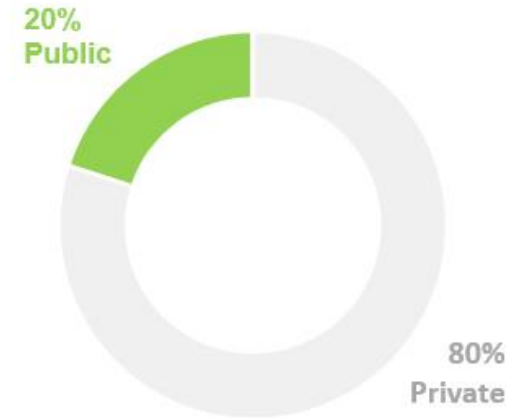
- StreetTreeSF / routine, scheduled maintenance
- Emergency / storm response
- Individual response to 311 Service Requests
(311 / email / Urban Forestry Inspector)

Tree removal by property owner (construction-related)

Tree removal by property owner (non-construction)

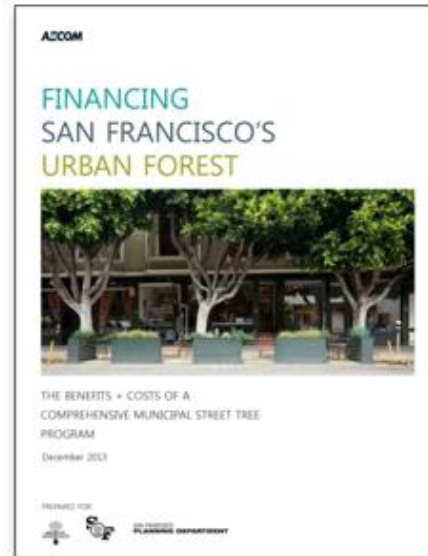
Historically, the City only maintained 1/3 of the street trees

2016



Six years ago,
we were only funded
to care for
28,000
street trees

PREPARE A CREDIBLE SOLUTION: URBAN FOREST PLAN



2012

URBAN FOREST PLAN

2013

FINANCE STUDY

2016

BALLOT MEASURE

BALLOT MEASURE (2016)

E

Responsibility for Maintaining Street Trees and Surrounding Sidewalks

Shall the City amend the Charter to transfer responsibility from property owners to the City for maintaining trees on sidewalks around their property as well as sidewalks damaged by the trees, and pay for this by **setting aside \$19M** per year from its General Fund, adjusted annually based on City revenues?



2022



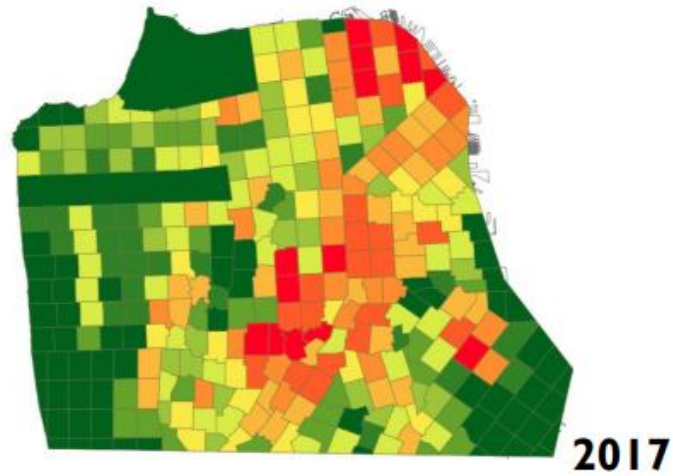
San Francisco's program
to care for the City's

125,000
street trees

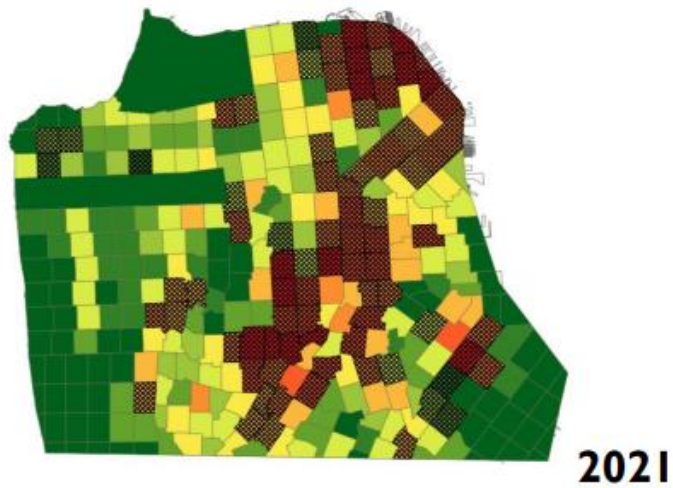
and repair sidewalks
damaged by tree roots.

StreetTreeSF Keymap Progress

Completed



Completed



Permits - Street Trees and Plants

Services

- Report a Problem
- Cleaning Programs
- Contractor Resources
- Garbage & Waste
- Graffiti
- Permits
- Potholes
- Public Records Requests
- Public Toilets
- Recycling & Refuse Collection
- Storm Preparation
- Street Sweeping
- Sidewalks
- Street Resurfacing
- Street Trees and Plants
 - Ficus Trees
 - Greening Projects
 - Permits - Street Trees and Plants
 - Billboard Street Tree Pruning
 - Plant A Street Tree
 - Remove A Street Tree
 - Sidewalk Landscaping
 - Planting Strategy
 - StreetTreeSF
 - Street Tree Listings
 - Street Tree Map

Public Works issues street tree planting and removal permits as well as sidewalk landscaping permits to residents.

Street Tree Planting - There is no fee required for a street tree planting permit. However, the permit is necessary to ensure that trees do not impact infrastructure and are appropriately planted so that they thrive and become a neighborhood asset.

Street Tree Removal - If a street tree is in poor health or structurally unsound, the City will remove the tree following the public notification process. If you wish to remove a street tree for a reason other than poor health, you must obtain a permit to remove the tree and go through the City's tree-removal permitting process. **Street Tree removal without a permit is a violation of Article 16 of the Public Works Code and penalties will apply.**

Sidewalk Landscaping - We issue low-cost permits for sidewalk landscaping so that residents can transform a portion of their sidewalk into an attractive landscaped area. Public Works staff ensure that sidewalk landscaping is properly constructed and maintained to protect public safety, ensure the integrity of City infrastructure. Landscaped sidewalks look great, provide wildlife habitat, reduce heat island effect, and increase property values!

Billboard Street Tree Pruning - A permit is required before any Street Tree within 10 feet of a general advertising sign can be pruned. **Street Tree pruning near a general advertising sign without a permit is a violation of Article 16 of the Public Works Code and penalties will apply.**

Please note, all of San Francisco's street trees are now being maintained and cared for by the Bureau of Urban Forestry. For this reason you need to prune a tree adjacent to your property prior to a StreetTreeSF permit application. The pruning of street trees without prior permission from the Bureau of Urban Forestry is a violation of the Public Works Code and penalties will apply.

Street Trees and Plants

Ficus Trees

Greening Projects

Permits - Street Trees and Plants

Billboard Street Tree Pruning

Plant A Street Tree

Remove A Street Tree

Sidewalk Landscaping

Planting Strategy

StreetTreeSF

Street Tree Listings

Street Tree Map

SEC. 806.

PLANTING AND REMOVAL OF STREET TREES.

(a)(2) Removal of Street Trees.

The Department may not cut down or remove a Street Tree, unless 30 days prior to the Removal date, the Department notifies all Interested San Francisco organizations and, to the extent practical, all owners and occupants of properties that are on or across from the block face where the affected Tree is located. In addition, 30 days prior to the Removal date, the Department shall post a notice on the affected Tree.

NO DOUBLE
PARKING
ANYTIME
DOUBLE FINE ZONE
6AM - 9AM
4PM - 7PM
MON - FRI

NO PARKING
6 AM TO 8 AM
TUES THUR SUN
STREET CLEANING

Mitchell Brothers
O'FARRELL
THEATRE

O'FARR

AUTOTECH
REPAIRS AND
SALES
MERCEDES, BMW
AUTOMOBILES
441-3342

Gibson

White-Westinghouse

612
09120

Examples of public notices / posting notices



Tree Removal Notifications / Districts 1-11

sfpublicworks.org/tree-removal-notifications

Tree Removal Notifications

Services

[Report a Problem](#)
[Cleaning Programs](#)
[Contractor Resources](#)
[Garbage & Waste](#)
[Graffiti](#)
[Permits](#)
[Potholes](#)
[Public Records Requests](#)
[Public Toilets](#)
[Recycling & Refuse Collection](#)
[Storm Preparation](#)
[Street Sweeping](#)
[Sidewalks](#)
[Street Resurfacing](#)
[Street Trees and Plants](#)

[Ficus Trees](#)
[Greening Projects](#)
[Permits - Street Trees and Plants](#)
[Planting Strategy](#)
[StreetTreeSF](#)
[Street Tree Listings](#)
[Street Tree Map](#)
[Tree Removal Notifications](#)

[Pine Pitch Canker Recommendations](#)

[Urban Forest Plan](#)

This page is updated every Monday. On weeks when Monday is an observed holiday, the page will be updated on Tuesday of that week.

In accordance with [Public Works Code, Article 16, Section 806](#), a written appeal may be made in regards to the removal of a tree within 15 or 30 days of the posting date (depending on the posting period). Appeals must state the grounds for the appeal and may be sent to urbanforestry@sfdpw.org or mailed to San Francisco Public Works Bureau of Urban Forestry, 49 South Van Ness Ave, Ste 1000, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Our aim at Public Works is for San Francisco to have a thriving, robust urban forest.

That is why we always look for all alternatives before choosing tree removal or approving a property owner's request for removal. However, removals are sometimes necessary to protect public safety, first and foremost, and to navigate the many challenges of growing trees in an urban setting.

We always look to see if a street tree is replantable in its current location, or closest available site. If we have explored all options and cannot replant a street tree, that means the basin is not in compliance with [Public Works Director's Order 187,246](#), as well as with the Minimum Guidelines which can be found on the [Plant a Street Tree](#) page. Some common considerations that limit street tree replanting include sidewalk width, proximity to any existing infrastructure (street lights, traffic lights, stop signs, bus stops, etc.) and conflicts with any underground utilities.

Please note, photos and descriptions will be removed once the posting period has expired. Contact urbanforestry@sfdpw.org or 628-652-TREE (8733) with questions or for more information.

District 1



Reason(s) for Removal: While tree appears in fair condition, there is decay at base of tree on three sides of trunk. Bark is sloughing off.

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Tree Removal Notifications / city-wide



721 Arguello Blvd

Site Number: 1

Reason(s) for Removal: Tree is in significant decline; not likely to recover. Very thin canopy, compared to healthy trees of same species on block. Replace in situ. Received a service request for removal.



Posting Period: 11/21/22 - 12/06/22



5 Castro St

Site Number: 1

Reason(s) for Removal: Routine inspection for tree maintenance grid 38. Tree is in very poor condition. Tree is severely stressed as indicated by more than 80% canopy death. Large wound at base and current condition indicate that this tree is at increased risk for failure. Location is replantable.

Posting Period: 11/21/22 - 12/21/22



SEC. 806.

APPEAL of TREE REMOVAL.

(3) (A) Appeal of Tree Removal.

If within 30 days after the giving of Notice for Street Tree Removal, as specified in subsection (a)(2), or if within 15 days after the giving of notice for Removal of a hazard Street Tree, as specified in Subsection (a)(4), any Person files with the Department written objections to the Removal, the Director shall hold a hearing to consider public testimony concerning the proposed Tree Removal.

SEC. 806.

APPEAL of TREE REMOVAL.

(3) (A) Appeal of Tree Removal.

Written Notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be posted on the affected Tree, provided in a newspaper of general circulation, and sent to the objecting party, the owner of the property abutting the affected Tree, and all Interested San Francisco organizations, not less than seven days prior thereto.

2nd posting:

Hearing
Announcement

1st posting:

Removal is
proposed.



RECENT TWEETS

Tweets from @sfpublicworks

San Francisco Public Works
Retweeted

SG

SmithGroup
@SmithGroup · Dec 1

The AmeniPODS have landed!
#SanFrancisco is ushering in a new generation of SmithGroup-designed public amenities, including restrooms & multi-function kiosks, with the first new public toilet installed at Embarcadero Plaza: ow.ly/zaWc50LSQma
[@sfpublicworks](#) [@jcdecauxusa](#)



CALENDAR (PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS)

DEC
16

Commission Meetings
Regular Commission Meeting

DEC
07

Public Hearings
Tree Hearing

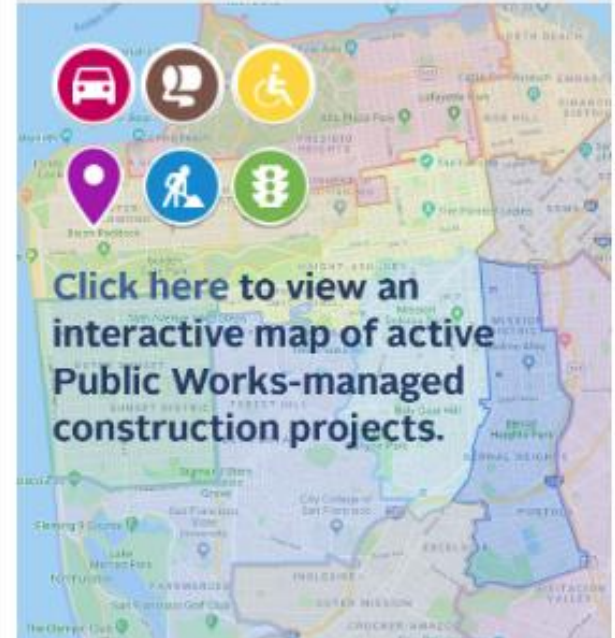
DEC
02

Commission Meetings
Regular Commission Meeting

Show Full Calendar

Audio Archive of Meetings and Hearings

CONSTRUCTION MAP



sfpublicworks.org/

Tree removal hearings, 1-2X a month.

Tree Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the Director of Public Works will hold a remote public hearing via teleconference to consider the item(s) listed below and that said public hearing will be held as follows:

DATE: December 7th, 2022

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: REMOTE MEETING VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

1. Call to Order

You are invited to a Zoom webinar When: December 7, 2022 10:00 AM Pacific Time	https://uso6web.zoom.us/j/86463600702
Or iPhone one-tap:	+16694449171,,86463600702# or +16699006833,,86463600702#
Telephone	+1 669 444 9171 or +1 669 900 6833
Webinar ID	864 6360 0702

2. Public Comment

Members of the public may address the hearing officer on matters that are within the department's jurisdiction but not on today's agenda.

3. Hearing Order 207350



SEC. 806.

APPEAL of TREE REMOVAL.

Appeal of Tree Removal.

(B) The Director shall issue a written decision and order on the objections after the public hearing specified above.

(C) The Director's decision shall be final and appealable to the Board of Appeals.

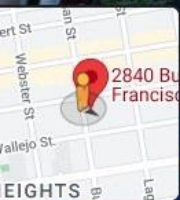
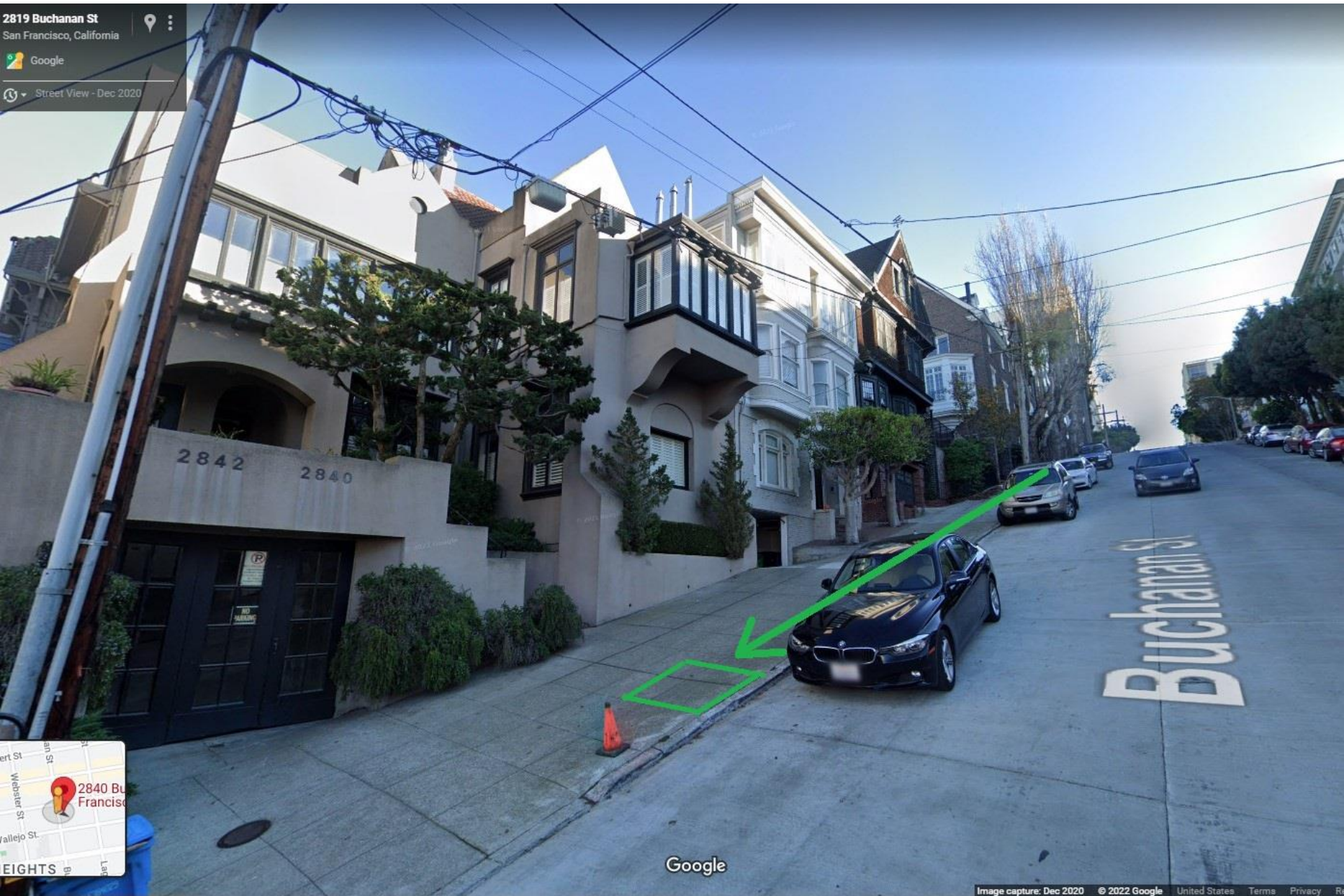
SEC. 806.

REPLACEMENT OF STREET TREES.

(6) Replacement of Street Trees.

If the Department removes a Street Tree under this subsection (a), the Department shall replace the Street Tree at the same location within **120 days of its removal**, with the following exceptions and qualifications.

(A) If the Department removes a Street Tree and cannot replace it in the same location due to accessibility requirements or interference with underground utilities, **the Department shall plant a new Street Tree in a new location as close as reasonably possible to the location of the Street Tree that the Department removed.**



Google

SEC. 806.

REPLACEMENT OF STREET TREES.

(C) If the Department is unable to replace a Street Tree within 120 days of removal, the Department shall record, in a **Delayed Replacement Tree Report**, the Tree's location, the reason for delay, and the date the Department projects replacement will take place.

The Department shall promptly plant Trees listed in the Delayed Replacement Tree Report as resources are available or constraints are resolved and shall compile and track the average length of time that Trees remain on the Delayed Replacement Tree Report..

SEC. 806. Planting and Removal by Persons Other Than the Department.

(1) **Planting and Removal Permits.** It shall be unlawful for any person to plant or to remove any Street Tree without a valid permit for such work issued by the Department.

...All work associated with a Street Tree permit must be completed within six months of issuance, unless an extension has been granted by the Department.

Remove a Street Tree

Services

[Report a Problem](#)

[Cleaning Programs](#)

[Contractor Resources](#)

[Garbage & Waste](#)

[Graffiti](#)

[Permits](#)

[Potholes](#)

[Public Records Requests](#)

[Public Toilets](#)

[Recycling & Refuse Collection](#)

[Storm Preparation](#)

[Street Sweeping](#)

[Sidewalks](#)

[Street Resurfacing](#)

[Street Trees and Plants](#)

[Ficus Trees](#)

[Greening Projects](#)

[Permits - Street Trees and Plants](#)

[Billboard Street Tree Pruning](#)

[Plant A Street Tree](#)

[Remove A Street Tree](#)

NOTE: If a removal permit is approved, the removal of the tree is expected to be completed by the applicant and all costs associated with the removal are the responsibility of the applicant, including all costs associated with the purchase and planting of the replacement tree.

A tree removal permit is required to remove a street tree in San Francisco. Any tree in the public right-of-way is considered a street tree.

New legislation enacted in 2007 requires that a permit be issued to remove any **Significant Tree**. As defined in the Public Works Code, Significant Trees are located on private property, but within 10 feet of the public right-of-way and also meet any one of the following size requirements:

- 20 feet or greater in height
- 15 feet or greater canopy width
- 12 inches or greater diameter of trunk measured at 4.5 feet above grade

These trees are granted the same protections as street trees, and a permit is required before any Significant Tree can be removed.

Urban Forestry Applications

[Tree Planting permit information](#)

[Tree Removal permit information](#)

[Tree Planting Requirements per Public Works Code\(PWC\) 806.D](#)

[Tree Planting and Protection CheckList](#)

Site Information

DO NOT USE THE BACK BUTTON UP TOP - PROBLEMS ARISE!!

Address: Enter a street address, street names take a few seconds to load, please be patient.

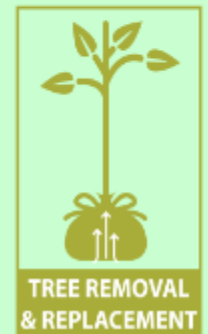
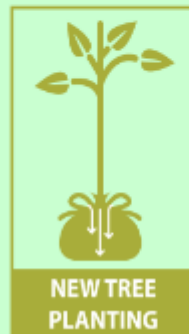
<input type="text" value="Address#"/>	<input type="text" value="Street Name"/>	<input type="text" value="Tree Loc"/>
---------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

[Lookup Address](#)

Detailed Location Description (ie. in front of property / "on XYZ Street side of property")

<input type="text" value="Location Description"/>

- ☐ *I agree to hold harmless the City and County of San Francisco, its agents, officers, and employees from any damages. The City has the right to make changes in parking, landscaping, your sidewalk landscaping permit may be rescinded and you will be required to remove the land public hearing prior to implementation.



SEC. 806. Planting and Removal by Persons Other Than the Department..

(3) Removal.

(A) An abutting property owner who desires a permit to remove a Street Tree shall apply to the Department on the designated form.

The Department may grant or deny the permit in accordance with the following procedures and requirements. If the Department grants a Tree removal permit, it shall require that a Street Tree or Trees of equivalent replacement value to the one removed be planted in the place of the removed Tree or impose an in-lieu fee unless it makes written findings detailing the basis for waiving or modifying this requirement.

SEC. 806. Planting and Removal by Persons Other Than the Department.

(3) Removal.

(A) (i) Where an abutting property owner removed a Street Tree or Trees **without obtaining a permit**, the Department shall require that the property owner plant a replacement Street Tree or Trees with total diameter six-inches above ground that is equal to or greater than the total diameter of the Street Tree or Trees that were removed without a permit.



NO PARKING
9 AM TO 11 AM
MONDAY
STREET CLEANING

5YNP635

SEC. 806.

ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES

(c) Administrative Penalties.

(1) In addition to the penalties set forth in subsections (a) and (b) above, the Director may require any person who removes, or destroys a Tree in violation of the provisions of this Article 16 to pay, for each Tree removed or destroyed, a sum of \$10,000 or the Tree's Replacement value, whichever is greater.

The Director may require any person who injures a Tree in violation of the provisions of this Article 16 to pay a sum of money equal to the diminishment of the Tree's value as set forth in the current edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal (Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers).

SEC. 806.

Required Street Trees for Development Projects.

(d) **Required Street Trees for Development Projects.** The Director shall require Street Trees for the development projects as set forth in this Subsection (d).

(1) **Applicability.** This Subsection shall apply to development projects that involve any of the following:

- (A) the construction of a new building;
- (B) the addition of a dwelling unit;
- (C) the addition of a new curb-cut;
- (D) the addition of a garage; and/or
- (E) a net addition to an existing building of 500 gross square feet or more.



Significant Tree(s)

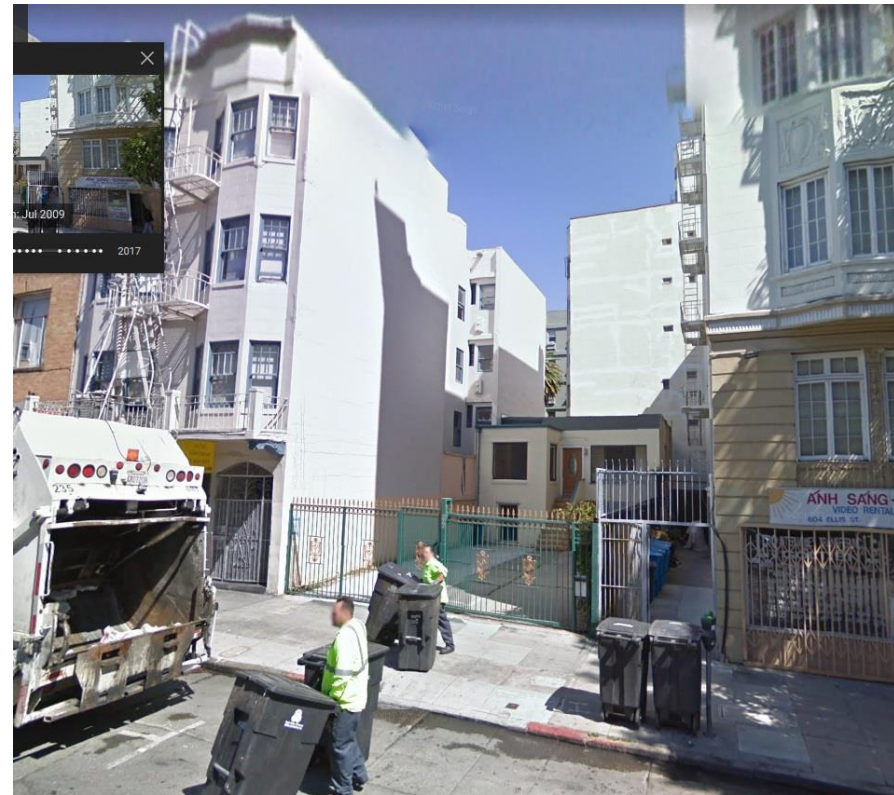
(a) Definition. . . a significant tree shall be a tree:

- (1) on property under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works or
- (2) on privately owned-property with any portion of its trunk within 10 feet of the public right-of-way,

Significant Tree(s)

...and (3) that satisfies at least one of the following criteria:

- (a) a diameter at breast height (DBH) in excess of twelve (12) inches,
- (b) a height in excess of twenty (20) feet, or
- (c) a canopy in excess of fifteen (15) feet.



Why remove a tree?

Tree removal by Public Works (or contractor)

- StreetTreeSF / routine, scheduled maintenance
- Emergency / storm response
- Individual response to 311 Service Requests
(311 / email / Urban Forestry Inspector)

Tree removal by property owner (construction-related)

Tree removal by property owner (non-construction)